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MARCH'S FAMOUS FUNNY FARCES

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In a Doctor's Office

BY JEANNETTE JOYCE

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CHARACTERS

An Attendant in Nurse's Garb.

MRS. SNAP—*A middle-aged country woman.*

MR. SAYLITTLE—*A quiet, dignified old man.*

MRS. GABMORE—*A talkative, self-sufficient woman.*

HENRY GABMORE—*Her meek husband.*

MRS. SWELL—*Who can not endure the common herd.*

DINAH—*A colored nurse.*

MRS. SWELL'S SON—*An irrepressible of six.*

MR. JOCOSE—*A young man, with a joke for all occasions.*

MISS GUSHER—*A spinster in dress and years, but not in manner.*

SCENE: *Waiting room of a famous specialist. Small alcove in one corner with desk and telephone, where attendant is busy when not answering door. Magazines on table which waiting patients turn nervously when they have nothing else to do. As curtain rises bell rings, and attendant glides slowly and noiselessly to door.*

MRS. SNAP (*waving attendant aside and striding into room*): You certainly take your time, young lady, to let a person in. Where's the doctor?

ATTENDANT (*voice soft and very low*): Doctor Wayup has not yet arrived. His office hours are from ten-thirty to noon. Will you kindly step here and fill out this card. (*Exit.*)

MRS. SNAP (*reading card and soliloquizing*): Name. Well, I've no objection to givin' my name. Age. That's nobody's business. Color of hair and eyes. Nonsense! If he ain't blind, he can see that when he looks at me. Any insanity in family? No, not till I was crazy enough to trust a fool doctor.

ATTENDANT (*returning*): Here is a pen. Will you kindly fill in the blanks?

MRS. SNAP: No, I'll not. You can tell him.

ATTENDANT (*more softly than ever*): That is impossible. You can reach Doctor Wayup only through the card system.

MRS. SNAP: You don't say so. (*Bell rings and Mrs. Snap seats herself. Attendant admits Mr. Saylittle, who wears a bandage over one side of face. After some time.*) Face hurt you much?

MR. SAYLITTLE (*looking up surprised*): No, madam.

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MRS. SNAP: That's funny. Looks like it might hurt powerful bad. My husband had some trouble with his face; wore it tied up just like your's for a time. (*No response from old gentleman. After a pause.*) But law, he's dead—been dead goin' on twenty years.

MR. SAYLITTLE: That was before the day of specialists.

MRS. SNAP: Yes, thank fortune. They'd a killed him and took all his money, too. As it was, I had enough to buy a little place where I can keep a cow and raise chickens, and if folks 'ud pay their bills— (*Bell rings and attendant opens door as before.*)

MRS. SWELL (*accompanied by nurse and boy*): Do you recall that the doctor gave orders for me to wait in his private office? Will you see if I can be accommodated there? (*Attendant leaves and Mrs. Swell walks haughtily to a window where she stands with back to room.*)

SON (*who has been gazing at Mr. Saylittle*): Say, is it catchin' like mumps and chickenpox, Gramp? (*Nurse and mother both rush at boy.*)

Dinah, I wish you would learn to attend to your charge. Take hall and amuse him.

SON (*up hands in horror*): For Laudy Sake, missus, doan you send me out in this house alone. Ise heard about these doctors what cuts you up and puts you together agin, and Ise plum scared to death—I is fo' sure.

SON (*tugging at her hand*): Aw, come on, Dinah, I want to see him do it.

ATTENDANT (*entering and addressing Mrs. Swell*): The janitor has just opened the private office, you may wait there.

DINAH (*leaving*): Thank the Laud!

MRS. SNAP: Now, what do you think of that swell? She don't need no specialist to tell her what ails her—I'll do it for nothin'. She's got a vacancy up here. (*Taps forehead. Bell rings.*)

MRS. GABMORE (*enters talking to Mr. Gabmore*): Now, Henry, quiet yourself, and leave everything to me. (*To attendant who presents card.*) Here, let me have that; I know all about it. Miss Jones, our neighbor, who was operated on last summer, told me all about the minor working of these things. (*Writes and talks.*) Henry, don't be worried. There's nothin' on here that will hurt anybody, and I believe in givin' the doctors all the help you can.

MRS. SNAP (*sarcastically*): Yes, they need it. (*Bell rings.*)

MR. JOCOSE (*with an effort to be gay*): Say, is the Doc in?

ATTENDANT: Doctor Wayup's office hours do not begin until ten-thirty.

MR. JOCOSE (*looking at watch*): Thirty minutes in the cell adjoining, eh? Well, I guess I can stand it. (*Sits down next to Mr. Saylittle.*) Pardner, you look knocked out? What round was it that finished you? (*Laughs loud at joke, as attendant hands him card which he reads.*) Say, what do you want all these facts for, my tombstone?

MRS. GABMORE (*smiling appreciatively*): My, young man, you've got a fortune in your disposition. I often tell Gabmore if he'd just cherk up and talk a little, it would do him more good than medicine or specialists either.

MR. SAYLITTLE: I take it you have never been sick, madam. (*Bell rings.*)

MISS GUSHER (*entering*): How do you do, my dear? Is the dear doctor in?

ATTENDANT: I am expecting him now at any moment. Just be seated, Miss Gusher.

MISS GUSHER: Oh! how lovely of you to remember my name.

MR. JOCOSE (*aside to others*): That's dead easy—Gush—Gusher.

MISS GUSHER: You know, my dear, there was no earthly reason for my stopping this morning, but I just could not refrain from telling the dear doctor once again how wonderful he is. I think I'll wait right here until he comes.

MRS. SNAP: Yes, I guess you will. That's what I've been doin' for more'en two hours, and I've got a good reason.

MRS. GABMORE (*to Miss Gusher*): So it is true that Doctor Wayup can do wonderful things?

MISS GUSHER: Wonderful, why my dear woman he performs miracles in my case—

MRS. SNAP (*snippily*): What was your case?

MISS GUSHER: Hallucination, the queerest affliction. I would imagine all of absurd things—that I was growing old, don't you know. That terribly stupid. That people avoided me. That I was really homely—and you know. Someone advised me to see Doctor Wayup, and he has brought me out of all that. Just look at me now. I know myself, as I am.

MRS. GABMORE: Wonderful! Henry, take courage.

MRS. SNAP: I think he made you worse.

MR. JOCOSE: Some miracle man— (*Telephone rings.*)

ATTENDANT (*speaking into it*): Yes—You will not! Be gone for a month—All right—Good-bye. (*Addressing the waiting crowd.*) Doctor Wayup telephones that he is leaving unexpectedly for a month's rest at the seashore.

MISS GUSHER: Poor dear! I feared a breakdown for him! Such trying work and long hours! How I shall miss him! (*Exit.*)

MR. JOCOSE (*taking Mr. Saylittle by arm*): Come on, pardner. I've got a month's stay of execution. (*Exeunt.*)

MRS. GABMORE (*leaving and talking*): Well, Henry, cheer up. What I've heard has surely encouraged me. (*Exeunt.*)

ATTENDANT (*to Mrs. Snap, who stands the picture of disgust*): Perhaps, since the doctor is leaving, I might venture to tell him of your case if—

MRS. SNAP (*with vigor*): My case is this. I've been supplyin' the doctor's family with the best of fresh eggs and butter for six weeks. His wife ain't never got no money and I decided I'd try him, but the president himself 'ud be a lot easier to get to. I don't want to be killed by a specialist nor cured a' somethin' I ain't got. I want my egg and butter money, and I want it quick.

(*Curtain*)

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